

Dr. Jeffery D. Long  
Professor of Religion & Asian Studies  
Elizabethtown College  
One Alpha Drive  
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

Email: [LongJD@etown.edu](mailto:LongJD@etown.edu)  
Phone: 717-361-1507

Dr. Thomas Adams, Executive Director  
Instructional Quality Commission  
Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Division (CFIRD)  
California Department of Education  
1430 N Street, Room 3207  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Dr. Adams and members of the Instructional Quality Commission,

My name is Jeffery D. Long. I am a professor of religion and Asian Studies at Elizabethtown College and am writing in reference to the proposed history and social science frameworks.

I am writing today to express concern that the world history framework on India is inaccurate and outdated, leaving the reader with the general impression that Hinduism is not a living tradition. Instead, the frameworks, specifically lines 559-563 seem to depict Hinduism as a product of external invasion (though the scholarship on this claim is strongly disputed). It also somewhat confusingly introduces the term "Brahmanism," as referred to in line 570. The term Brahmanism is both problematic and unnecessary given that the subject of study in this standard is Hinduism. It would be just as accurate to call the system of beliefs and practices described here "early Hinduism."

The other issue is how caste is described. The frameworks lines 583-90 state: "The main social categories, known as varnas, were priests; warriors; farmers, artisans, and merchants; dependent laborers; and, by 500 CE or earlier, dalits, or "untouchables." This class system became distinctive over the centuries for being especially complex and formal, involving numerous prohibitions that kept groups ritually separated from one another. Because these divisions became particularly rigid, scholars have classified this hierarchy as a caste system."

These lines omit the idea of jatis, which were the occupation-based classification system that formed the practical basis of caste. In fact, the caste system as a rigid system of hereditary occupations did not emerge until much later than the period in question, and its evolution into rigidity did not take place until even later yet in Indian history. Contextualizing the development of the caste system, including separating the concept of varnas from jatis, is vital to ensuring that both teachers and textbook publishers have an accurate understanding of this complex, evolving social system.

Additionally, the fact that Hinduism's key philosophies, including the meanings of dharma and karma, are not mentioned in detail in the frameworks does not give educators any guidance on how to discuss these topics in class.

I urge you to consider adopting framework revisions suggested in the public comment process by groups such as the Hindu American Foundation and the Uberoi Foundation Institute for Curriculum Advancement, because their recommendations are grounded in scholarly consensus.

You may contact me for more information if you wish.

Thank you in advance,

Jeffery D. Long